

SPEAKING UP AT CREATING CHANGE 2006

by Terah Crews

Exiting the plane into Kansas City, I had no idea what to expect from the next few days. Not only was this my first national conference, it was also my first gay event that did not consist of only North Carolina residents. You can only imagine the millions of questions that ran through my head as I stood in the booth surrounded by suitcases awaiting the shuttle to the hotel.

The first day was rather uneventful; I think many of us used the time to explore and familiarize ourselves with the new environment. You get the impression that you're not necessarily meant to leave the convention center. With three enormous hotels, a mall, theater, ABC/Drug store, and many restaurants interconnected with a glass walkway aptly named "the Link," there is no need to venture into the city. For those adventurous enough to dare the streets of Kansas City you soon realize why exactly you're meant to stay inside. While the convention center is luxurious, modern, and impressive the rest of the city is well.... not. Interestingly this was important to the creation of the atmosphere at Creating Change. With everything closed in and within walking distance, I found that most participants simply did not leave, contributing to this sense of a bubbled gay world, where your immediate assumption is that everybody is some letter on the spectrum GLBTQI.



If I witnessed a guy and a girl appearing as if they were together, I began to venture as to their gender identity. Maybe she used to be male or maybe he used to be a female. Moreover I overheard many other people doing the same thing: "look at them what are they doing here?" (Laughing)... "I'll bet they are wondering what kind of conference did I stumble into." As I'm sure many of you are thinking, it was this thought that made me first aware of how easily Bi issues can be forgotten in the midst of so much diversity. It never oc-

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Deb Morley
Katrina Piehler
Annie Goglia
Linda Blair
Ellyn Ruthstrom

And many more fabulous people!
You know who you are!

Hi Everyone,

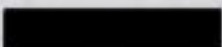
This issue's theme is Bi Activism, a theme inspired partially by the slow shift in our country's national initiative and by a couple conferences, which took place in October and November.

With so many active readers, I wondered how activism has shaped your lives, for better or worse. What seems most pressing is the need to make ourselves visible within the LGBT community.



BiWomen is published quarterly.

Editor:



This issue is an attempt to do just that, to provide a place to make ourselves more visible within the community. The activists in this issue have inspired me in many, myriad ways.



The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities, and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

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DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1, 2007

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

A Bi Response to Pop Culture

Calling all book, film, and art reviews. Calling all critiques of pop culture, media, and advertising

curred to me that one or more members of those couples I witnessed might be Bi. After all Bisexual is what you are when you are single right? I mean once you are seeing somebody you're either gay or straight. At this point I realized what was truly lacking despite the apparent effort to bring Bi issues into light with workshops, dinners, and caucuses some bad, some good, some made with good intentions. We were invisible amongst so much activity. I myself found my thoughts venturing towards identifying as Lesbian until I realized my own error and the need for awareness.

As you may have already guessed, I identify as bisexual, but that is merely my identity. To me this reflects an internal attraction to both the male and female form or essence. However this doesn't necessarily mean I date both. In fact I am going to indulge a secret of mine to you...I have never actually slept with a biological man (male born a male). Furthermore, I do not date or pursue male companionship. To this extent many would tell me "You're a Lesbian." In fact, even in the midst of so much open-mindedness at Creating Change, I was told this several times: "Why identify as bi? Wouldn't it be so much easier to just say I'm a Lesbian?" Isn't it funny how we don't question the girl who has only kissed another girl and doesn't go to Lesbian bars or Lesbian events as being anything but bisexual? Why is that? Why is it that we are so quick to label somebody gay for not having a heterosexual experience but not vice-versa? Are we only comfortable with the "straight bisexuals," the ones that venture into our Dyke communities and give some unexpected grrl a one-night stand? What if I want to have a heterosexual experi-

ence? Meet a guy, date a little, and experience what it is like only to go back to my lesbian enclave? Such a thing is unthinkable! I need only mention the possibility of going on a date with a guy for my friends to turn up their noses and move for an intervention. "Now honey (a friend on each side of me with hands resting on my shoulders), we know you like to call yourself Bisexual and we love you for that; its part of what makes you you. But you can't actually date a guy; it just wouldn't be right." There is this feeling that even though I am attracted to maybe one guy to every 20 womyn, my circle of friends will not let me do it. It's as if I have to choose between worlds and to date a man is to assume a new lifestyle, to relinquish my Dyke card and all its benefits.

So for all those Bisexual Lesbians out there I pose a question: how do we remain true to ourselves and retain the support of our community? How do we fight this "Homosexist" standard of incorporating all those outside the heterosexual lifestyle into fuel that keeps the movement going? We are witnessing the creation of a countermovement that will only serve to reinforce the current binary heterosexual vs. homosexual. But we as Bisexuals, the connection between the two polar ends have the ability to break the power struggle down. We must mobilize, uniting in our connections to all as a bridge building movement, one that can hopefully prevent a system being set in stone in which queers and non-queers are pit against each other. How do we find ways to empower each other and connect, offering support where we lack it amongst our queer friends?

By picking up this paper you are contributing to change. Now ask yourself what else can I do? ▲



“We Don’t Vote on Civil Rights” by [REDACTED]

Perhaps it was because the Democrats had already nabbed the House. Perhaps it was because they were about to add the Senate...because my fellow citizens decided to vote on politics rather than personal behavior. Perhaps because the sun was now peaking through the billowy clouds the moment we stepped from our offices on Beacon Hill to march in persistent protest down the short, brick walk to the State House. Whatever the reason, I felt good that Thursday afternoon in early November as my 10-15 colleagues, some gay and mostly not, and I gathered for our, now ritual, jaunt.

Indeed, this has become a repetitious event for us, I thought, as I observed people gather their tattered signs and adorn themselves with purple, red, and blue stickers. There were stories, too, the most memorable being about the year that my boss landed himself on the front page of the Boston Globe for colorfully expressing his own dissent. Yet how powerful an effect these small acts of selflessness had on me. I was witnessing my relatively new colleagues, friends, and neighbors stand for me, for my right to marry regardless of the gender or sex of my partner. But by doing so, they/we were standing for much, much more. We were standing for the civil rights of everyone. Right?

After an hour of endless chanting, opponent eye pointing, and sign sharing, I headed back to work alone. When a young woman handed me a flyer, I instinctively retrieved it. “MassEquality, Get off your knees, Marriage (does not equal) Liberation,” it reads. The argument is familiar to me...the idea that queer culture cannot be truly liberated within

the confines of heteronormative institutions. One question on the flyer is particularly memorable, "As everyone draws on the Stonewall rebellion for inspiration, why is it forgotten that queer, low-income, trans women of color led the riot that night?" As I reread it now, it quietly reminds me that transgender people recently won the right to change their sex on birth certificates and licenses in New York. Perhaps not as newsworthy as the 109-87 vote by the Massachusetts legislators to ban same-sex marriage on the 2008 November ballot but certainly a life changing moment for the hidden members of the LGBT community. ▲



My boss, Tom Hallock (right), associate publisher and marketing director of Beacon Press, makes a debut on the cover of the *Boston Globe*, 2004.



BRUNCH COORDINATOR WANTS YOU TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.

LGBT: inclusive in name only?

by Wendy Curry

As my first year back as a national bisexual activist is winding down, I see yet another one of my letters to the editor in *The Advocate*. I think that makes 3 out of a dozen published this year. After rereading its contents, I'm left in a retrospective mood. Do these little letters matter?

A look at advocate.com's bulletin boards suggests no advance in bi tolerance/education. The bi bashing goes on. Even the magazine's contents remain stereotypical. The one bi note in the last issue is about a gangster rap song, "She Bi," a song about a woman entertaining her pimp by putting on a show with another woman. They inappropriately compare "She Bi" with Living Colour's "Bi" (a fairly balanced song whose worst lyric is "everybody wants you when you're bi").

But *The Advocate* is not alone. This past year has contained major disappointments from working with other LGBT organizations: reports of bi phobia at PFLAG sponsored teen group meetings in central MA, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) lack of inclusion of a single bi group in their "marriage matters" ad, the lack of a bi advisory group for Out and Equal, and the Washington Blade's insistence on paying columnists like Woody Miller (who continues to state we don't exist).

Sure, there have been victories. I've had big personal wins at my company's LGBT leadership group, and the Lambda Literary Foundation has announced a bisexual Lammy, but that's where national visibility seems to end.

Are we not active enough in national LGBT

groups? NGLTF has historically had loads of bi inclusion (Lorraine Hutchins being just one of the dedicated NGLTF volunteers). Heck! BiNet USA even has a seat at the NGLTF round table.

My more subversive side yens to contact these groups and say, "shape up, or I'm taking back my B!" After all, if they don't act like a real LGBT group, why should they get the benefit of including us? So long as they use this label, no one questions their inclusiveness. Certainly, there's always the risk that they'd take this announcement as an excuse to NOT be bi inclusive. But, I can't help wondering—do we ever make real progress without risk?

Another temptation—give up working with LGBT coalitions entirely and go back to bi community building. Maybe they don't take us seriously because we are invisible in LGBT spaces. We're assumed to be gay or lesbian. Since there's no unified bi presence, it's easy to not take us seriously.

I'm heading to the Transcending Boundaries conference—a perfect example of a successful coalition (transgendered, intersexed, bisexual)—one that is created not on the backs of "others," but by ourselves. As I begin packing, I'm left to muse all the options. Where will I put my energies next year? I hoping this conference will supply some answers.

Notes from Transcending Boundaries 2006

by Wendy Curry



BiNet USA made TBC our main conference commitment of the year. We had a table in the vendor space, facilitated some workshops, ran a sticker campaign, and put a BiNet USA flyer in everyone's registration packet. TBC/PFLAG had an amazing 450 pre-registered attendees! Given the number of walk ins, I'm pretty sure they hit 500 by the end of the weekend.

There were two themes over the weekend:

- 1) spirituality. How anti gay religious rhetoric can hurt our psyche, integrating spirituality into sexuality, working with faith groups were but a few of the workshops
- 2) telling our stories. Countering the anti gay religious crap and homo/bi-phobia in general is best done by telling people your story.

Intersex Awareness: As Friday was Intersex Awareness Day, Esther Morris Leidolf was brought in to do the opening plenary/discussion: a witty, passionate presenter and author of *The Missing Vagina Monologues*, which she performed for us.

The vendor space is typically my favorite part of a conference. Some of the vendors were The Tiffany Club, marriage equality, Ron Suresha Jackson (with books including *BiGuys*), the straight spouse network, the BRC, about a dozen different PFLAG chapters, and the usual jewelry, shirts, art, and book folks.

Jennifer Finney Boylan, author of *She's Not There*, spoke of her life—becoming a woman, life with her partner. An excellent presenter, she had me laughing loudly one moment and tears flowing the next.

Workshops: Ann and Sadelle, coordinated "a closet for two." Brett Gen-

ny Beemyn, author of *Bisexual Men in Culture and Society* and *Bisexuality in the Lives of Men*. Zir workshop was about being trans on campus. Tom Limoncelli (recent winner of the Brenda Howard award for bi activism) showed folks how to maximize the power of their web site and how to better facilitate a group. The fabulous Robyn Ochs facilitated a bi 101 workshop. Valerie White facilitated her ever-popular poly 101 workshop. Our dear president showed a movie about Harry Hay (founder of the Matachine Society). There were probably 40 other workshops on a variety of topics.

Penelope Williams, a one woman firehouse keeps the Bi People of Color and Bi Youth groups thriving and productive. Dawn Commeau presented some of her early work on Bi women.

Lani Ka-ahumanu and BobBI Kappel revived the infamous "Safer Sex Sluts" safe sex discussion, morphing it into one that accounts for changes as we age (the over 50 crowd is perhaps the fastest growing HIV infection demographic).

The mid day lunch had 2 plenary speakers. Lani Ka'ahumanu, author of *Bi Any Other Name* spoke about her history. The second speaker, Sam Thoron, president of PFLAG, spoke about his daughter coming out.

The closing plenary speaker, Matt Kailey, spoke about accidental activism. ▲

Book Review



Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic, Alison Bechdel
Houghton Mifflin, 2006

You don't have to be a fan of Alison Bechdel's cartoon *Dykes to Watch Out For* to appreciate her graphic memoir, *Fun Home*. I admit to being a long-term groupie of the comic strip that details the daily lives of a community of lesbian and bi women, their partners, children, and friends. It's political, it's funny, and Bechdel's ability to describe the lives of queer women is unmatched. So, knowing that *Fun Home* was a memoir—she calls it a family tragicomic—I was a little skeptical of sustaining my interest in a serious cartoon. Graphic novels are big right now, but I haven't been drawn into them—until now.

The title of *Fun Home* refers to the nickname for the funeral home that her family ran as a part-time business. Part-time? Well, apparently, the small town in Pennsylvania the Bechdels lived in didn't have enough of a flow of corpses to merit a full-time business. Both of her parents were also English teachers in the local schools, so death and literature are omnipresent in Bechdel's impressions of her early years.

In the acknowledgements, Bechdel thanks her mother and two brothers "for not trying to stop me from writing this book." And, indeed, Bechdel bravely delves

into the various secrets, lies, and revelations that pop up for her family at different times of her early life. She probes and reinterprets what she experienced as a child and generously shares what she has come to understand from her adult perspective.

The centerpiece of the book is Bechdel's relationship with her father, in all its complexities. Early on in the memoir, her father is introduced as a man consumed by his passions for decorating and gardening and sees his family—in particular his children—as simply extra hands to help him complete his various house and garden projects. His frequent and sudden outbursts of anger surface when the players around him don't measure up in the perfect world he is trying to create around him. But soon enough you learn that her father is hiding his sexuality among the ornate draperies, chandeliers, and colorful flowerbeds, and that his secret may have been the reason he kills himself by jumping in front of a truck.

In the glow of first love and a lesbian feminist awakening at college, Bechdel comes out to her family, only to have her parents unveil her father's double life to her. Bechdel confesses that she wants to view her father as a gay man because that would mirror her identity as a lesbian and bond them in some deeply emotional way that they perhaps never achieved during their life together. Her father's experience appears on the outside to have been that of a bisexual man, though we don't know if he chose to identify that way or if he would have chosen to live a gay life if given the opportunity—always the conundrum of bridging past lives with current freedoms.

Besides the overarching storyline of her fa-

ther's sexuality and suicide, there are some other significant parts to Bechdel's memoir. One of the best things about the book for me is the writer's perspective as a non-conforming girl child. She breaks the gender norms from a very young age—something I can relate to—and she sensitively describes the pitfalls as well as the joys of that experience. Another major part of her childhood is a long bout with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Her descriptions of the rituals she performed to get through her day as a young child are painful to read, but her recovery through her own determination and with the help of her mother really takes you inside her anxious condition. It's only in this section that you get a stronger sense of Bechdel's mother, usually a bit player compared to the amount of time the spotlight centers on her father. I wondered if it was because her mother is still alive and her father's absence allows her to shed more light on his effects upon her, but I can also see where her father's personality would perhaps just take up more space in the dynamics of the family.

I was happily surprised by the depth and emotional impact of *Fun Home*. It's not a light read. And, besides the weighty family traumas described, there are also many literary illusions—particularly of Proust and Homer—that may send you rummaging for your old college English notes. I particularly loved the stacks of books by bisexual and lesbian authors Bechdel devours in her dorm room as part of her own coming out process. Her realism shines through in these details, but the emotional resonance comes from a story well told. ▲

—Ellyn Ruthstrom

T A K E N O T E



BLISS Support and Social Group

Date: Wednesday November 1, 2006

Time: 7:00 pm - 8:45 pm

Repeats: repeats on the 1st Wed of every month

Where: The Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope Street in Boston's Back Bay

Description: All members of the bisexual community, their friends and allies, as well as people who think they might be bisexual or are interested in learning more about bi community resources, are welcome.

For more info on the BRC's Bisexual Support and Social (BLISS) Group, please email Linda and Luigi at: supportgroup@biresource.org

BOUNDLESS PRESENTS:

Getting the Sex You Want (and Not the Sex You Don't)

Thursday, December 7, 2006
7-9 pm at Fenway Community Health

7 Haviland Street, Boston

Whether you want something wild or prefer it quiet, come to our workshop led by Luigi Ferrer and Julie Ebin, Boundless Coordinator.

FREE! Dinner provided. For info, directions, RSVPs (appreciated but not necessary), or to be on our mailing list, contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org.



Belly BALLROOM **SALSA** Merengue

Where: West Roxbury School of Dance

Who: Liz Nania

How: Call Liz at 617-363-0029 or email liz@outtodance.com

OUT to Dance welcomes folks of any age, race, sexual orientation, body size, or level of dance ability. NO DANCE EXPERIENCE OR PARTNER NECESSARY!

D A T E S T O R E M E M B E R

Does your score on the Kinsey scale change? Do you find yourself attracted to both men and women? No need for confusion: You might be bisexual or bi-curious!

WHEN: Mondays, 7-9pm
WHERE: AIDS Project
Worcester @ 85 Green Street,
Worcester

FOR MORE INFORMATION
contact Christina, 508-755-3773
or glbt@aidsprojectworcester.org.



BIWOMEN MAILING

Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Contact Katrina at katp32@yahoo.com or 617.833.3035 to find out the location for the stuffing.



January 7, Sunday

Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) brunch at Megan and Carla's in Jamaica Plain (JP) at 11:00 a.m. Please bring a brunch dish or drinks to share.

Call or email Carla for directions and to let her know you are coming: 617-522-8819 or carlaimperial@yahoo.com.

ONGOING EVENTS

1st Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Be sure to confirm the time and date by calling 617-354-8807. Please call for meeting topics and other information

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Note: THIS IS A CLOSED GROUP. Please contact Denise at 508-315-3176 or email Marblesdgp@rcn.com

1st Wednesdays,

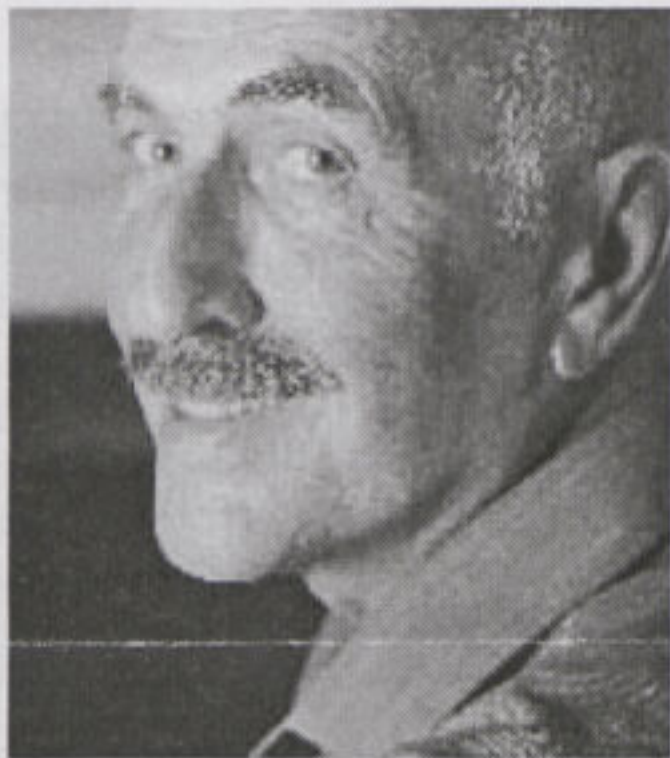
3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

THE LAST NOTE



“Don't make just two boxes because you're leaving out a tremendous segment of people.”
—Dr. Fritz Klein

The Bi-Award 2006, an award granted annually to a Dutch person who has made an extraordinary contribution in the area of bisexuality, has been granted posthumously to researcher/bi-activist Fritz Klein by the National Bisexual Network (LNBi). This was the first year that the award was granted to someone from outside the Netherlands.

Dr. Fritz Klein (USA), who died on May 24, 2006 at the age of 73, was an exceptional researcher in the field of bisexuality. With his Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG)—a model of sexual orientation which leaves the either/or binary thinking of hetero/homo behind—he developed a vision, which has for ever changed thinking about sexuality, gender, and sexual orientation. He created a multidimensional and inclusive basis for the scientific study of bisexuality.

Fritz Klein, with his organization the Bisexual Foundation and his website (www.bisexual.org), was a committed activist as well. His 1978 book *The Bisexual Option* continues to be a standard work on bisexuality. Apart from the fact that Fritz maintained a very special relationship with our country, his efforts have had a tremendous effect on the emancipation of the Dutch bisexual community.

BiWomen



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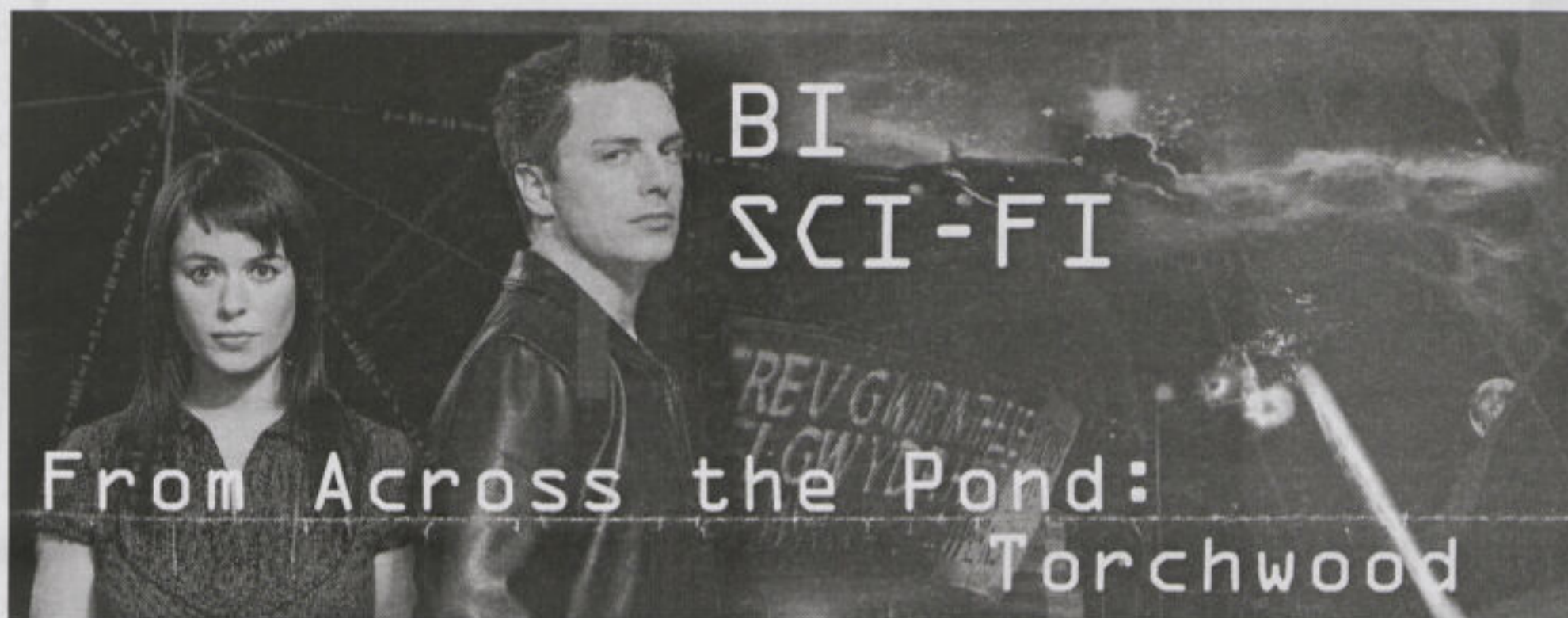
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by Debbie Block-Schwenk

As longtime readers of BiWomen will know, I'm a big science fiction fan. Probably due to higher production costs and corporate desires for financial success, sci-fi and fantasy shows as a group have lagged behind many other mainstream shows that have regular gay, lesbian, or bisexual characters. (There are a couple of exceptions, notably the lesbian characters on the now-defunct "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" TV series.) In this context, finding unambiguously bisexual characters on science fiction is even more difficult. So wouldn't it be great if there were a dark, quirky, action-packed science fiction show with a bisexual lead character and several other characters that have bisexual experiences? There is—if you live in the United Kingdom...

"Torchwood," a post prime-time spin-off of the British sci-fi classic "Doctor Who,"

finished its first season run on New Year's Day, with another season scheduled for the fall. Torchwood is a secret organization that deals with aliens on Earth and collects and analyzes alien technology. The show follows the Torchwood branch in Cardiff, Wales, located on top of a rift in time and space that easily allows aliens (and travelers from the past or future) to slip through. Torchwood's leader is Captain Jack Harkness, an enigmatic figure who doesn't hesitate to flirt with men or women. First appearing in "Doctor Who" in 2005, Captain Jack is a lapsed Time Agent from the 51st century, a future time when people have grown beyond "categories" around sexual orientation.

Jack is matter-of-fact about his bisexuality—or as series producer Russell T. Davies has also said "omnisexuality"—but all the main characters have at least one bisexual moment. Sadly, some of these are



BBWN Financial Statement 1/1/06 through 12/31/06

Balance forward 1/1/06: 3203.62

Expenses

Printing 1437.89
Postal fees & postage 299.35
Supplies 502.24
Merchandise purchased 193.50
Event expenses 585.18
Bank charges (checks, fee for 3rd-party bounced check) 20.85
Total expenses 3039.01

Income

Dues 627.50
Merchandise 1148.10
Bank Interest 2.52
Donations 250.00
Event income 375.00
Book project income 214.98
Total income: 2618.10
Balance as of 12/31/06
2782.71

Note: The balance in our checking account, while not immediately threatening, is down \$420 from this time last year!

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The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities, and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.



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IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

BI PRIDE

How do you celebrate your bisexuality? How have political events, like pride month, changed your life?

under the influence of aliens or alien technology, but others are presented naturally and positively. While computer specialist Toshiko has an unrequited crush on fellow Torchwood teammate Owen, she falls for a mysterious woman in the episode "Greeks Bearing Gifts." The fact that this relationship is between two women is a very minor part of the plot and is handled positively by others in Torchwood. By the end of the first season, one of the other male characters has also been established as bisexual.

As Jack Harkness, John Barrowman skillfully inhabits a character who is far from home in many ways and reluctant to reach out. Charming yet calculating, this gun-toting alien hunter is a figure whose sexuality is as natural as breathing. He is bemused, if not saddened, by the limits his 21st century colleagues put on their potential for connection, yet himself is scarred by past traumas and terrified to truly connect with anyone. Harkness's constant flirting won't stamp out any bi stereotypes; however, his actual conquests during the course of the show are few.

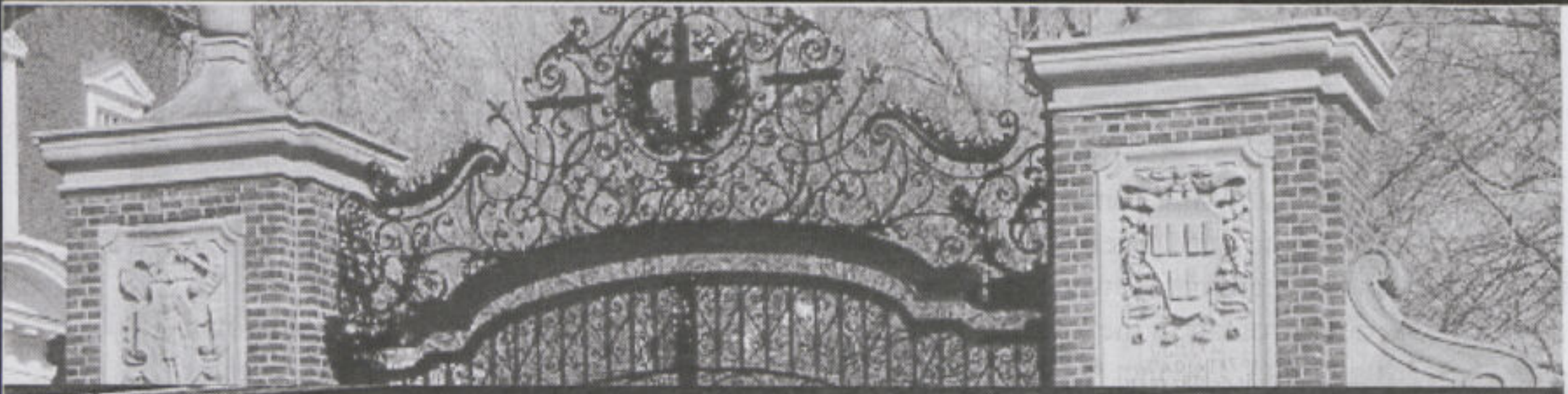
The two women in the ensemble cast are both complex and interesting. Toshiko (played by Naoko Mori) is smart and capable, shy, yet with depths of passion and strength that come out when under fire (emotional or literal). Gwen (Eve Myles), the newest member of the Torchwood team, is a former beat cop who brings a sense of compassion to the Torchwood mission, yet finds herself struggling with a job whose secrets alienate her from everyday life and from her boyfriend, Rhys. Rounding out the cast are Owen (Burn Gorman), as the acer-

bic doctor and medical specialist, and Ianto (Gareth David-Lloyd), the clean-up and back-up guy whose unobtrusive presence conceals a variety of secrets.

Producer Davies is probably best known in American LGBT circles as the creator of the British "Queer as Folk" mini-series that spawned the multi-season U.S. series of the same name. He's said that he wants Torchwood to be a very bisexual series, with no character singled out as "the gay character." The first season has made great progress in that regard. "Torchwood" has yet to be picked up for U.S. viewing. With its unabashed bisexual theme and strong characters, this show is unique and would be a positive example for U.S. science fiction and television overall (as "Queer as Folk" was before). Openly gay Barrowman as Captain Jack provides a strong contrast to those in the U.S. entertainment industry who are reluctant to cast out gay or bi actors in action-oriented roles.

The second season of "Torchwood" promises to provide more drama and exciting alien influences while the show matures and finds its own voice. Let's hope the positive messages about bisexuality continue and provide both entertainment for viewers and a place for bi viewers to see their experiences reflected and validated. We could use "Torchwood" on this side of the pond; let's hope that becomes a reality soon as well. ▲

email Sci-Fi Channel
at feedback@scifi.com
and ask them to pick
up this show



Every morning, in Harvard Yard, for generations, there has been a 15-minute service called "The Service of Morning Prayers"...

Last summer, much to my surprise (I have never attended this service and am entirely secular in my spirituality), I was invited to be the speaker. Due to the timing (eight days after the elections, and six days after the scheduled Constitutional Convention), it was entirely clear to me what the topic of my five-minute talk must be. Here's what said:

For several years now people in Massachusetts, and the rest of the United States, along with people in numerous countries throughout the world, have been engaged in heated debate about whether same-sex families are "real" and what, if any, type of recognition we merit. It's an odd and creepy feeling to be the subject of such debates, to read editorials, to look at polls and at voting results that show that in some states 4 of 5 voters would deny all recognition and legal protection to our families, that even in more liberal states many are willing to give us some recognition but reject the idea that our relationships be considered equal to theirs.

We have been labeled a "wedge issue" and accused of costing the Democrats the 2004 elections. The threat to civilization that we supposedly embody has been gleefully and adroitly used by right-wing evangelicals and politicians as a fundraising tool and as a means to "get out

the base." We have been held responsible for 9-11, for Hurricane Katrina, and for the destruction of the family. Centrist and progressive politicians step gingerly around us, hoping the subject of marriage equality will not come up.

But opponents of recognizing same-sex families are engaging in magical thinking. Same-sex couples have already created families, and we have done so in large numbers. Many of us already have children. We are not asking for permission to exist. We are asking that others acknowledge what already is. When we insist on equal recognition, support and protection from our government and from our fellow citizens, we do not ask as outsiders. We are pointing out that we are already here, we have been here for a long time, and we ask that our presence as citizens be recognized legally, culturally, and interpersonally.

In Brookline Town Hall on Monday, May 17th, 2004, I married Peg Preble, my life partner. We had already been together for 7 years and had committed ourselves to one another. I honestly believed that getting legally married would not be that big of a deal. But it was. Strangers waved to us from cars and buses. The town clerk who married us and his wife stayed up

late the night before making little wedding favors to hand out to all of the couples. On the street outside Brookline Town Hall, just before we married, a woman we didn't know ran up to us and handed us a bouquet of flowers. The town clerk, most of the employees at Brookline Town Hall, and most of the reporters and photographers present at this historic event shed tears of happiness at our wedding, which was the first in Brookline. We were surrounded by love. We were surrounded by affirmation. It was something we had never before experienced.

Before that day, and since, I have spent many days at the Massachusetts State House, and have been to numerous hearings and Constitutional Conventions. One moment stands out in my mind: I was speaking with a woman the age of my own mother, who finally blurted out "Why are you taking this so personally, dear? It's not personal!"

Perhaps to her it was not. Perhaps to her it was theory, or public policy. But me, and to those of us in same-sex relationships, it is precisely that. It is our real lives, our real families, our real love that is the subject of debate. It doesn't get more personal than this.

I'll end by reading a short passage written by Kristine Grimes: *Linda and I met and fell instantly in love in 1996. We moved into an apartment together in 1997 and started planning our life together. We had a big wedding in 1999 and bought a house in 2000. We had our first child in 2000 and our second in 2005...Oh, and somewhere thereabouts 2004, when someone who's supposed to be somebody decided our family was worthy, we had a legal recognition ceremony and our oh-so-ordinary existence became so-called "legitimate."* ▲

—Robyn Ochs



BRUNCH COORDINATOR WANTS YOU TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.

AMERICAN Romance IN "NEW QUEER CINEMA" BY JOLENE ORTIZ

The American Romance Industry is a great reflection of society's norms. Because we live in a heterosexist society, depictions of gender, sex, and sexuality are usually shown as dichotomous social system, which focuses more attention on heterosexuality themes in mainstream romance films. The queer themed romance movies that are being produced by today's major film studios present the society's assumptions that a linear connection between gender, sex and sexuality exists. Moreover, analyzing films reveal how each element connects in various ways that break the linear path and intersect as they influence one another. The romantic comedy *Imagine Me and You* and the spectacular award winning drama film *Brokeback Mountain* are examples of today's major film studios' presentation of

society's perspective on queer romance and the assumptions about normative ideas about gender, sex and sexuality.

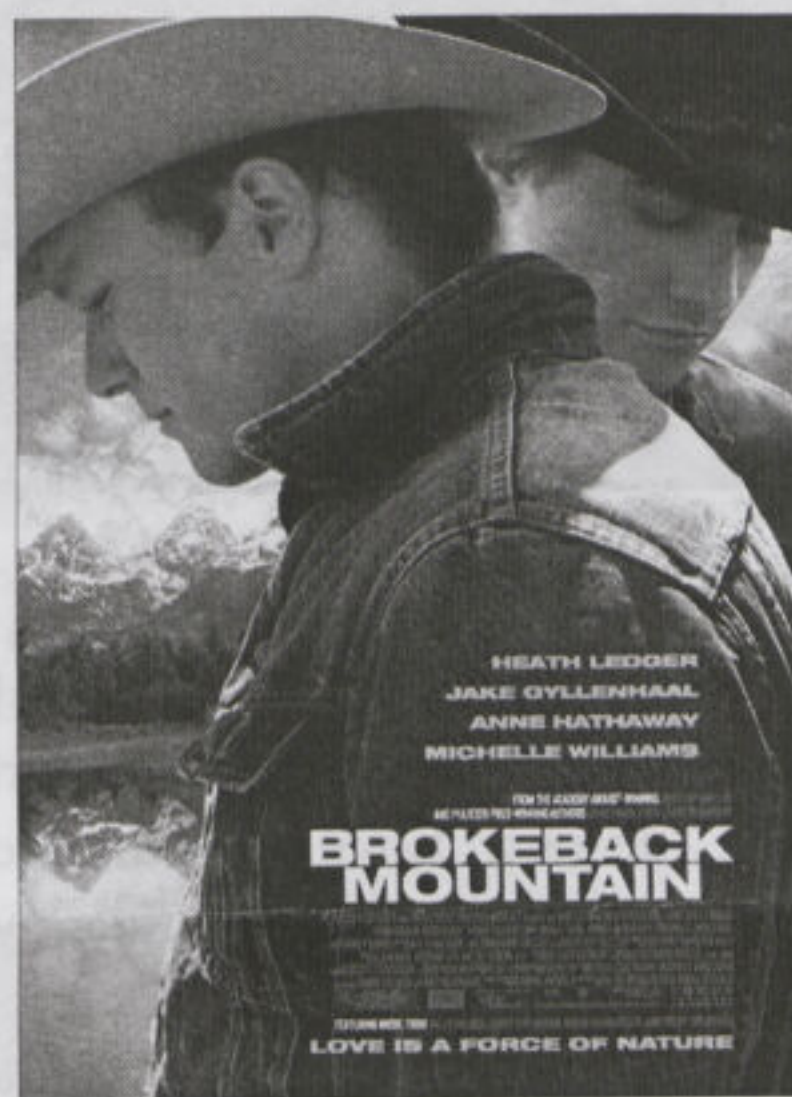
Daryl Chin's article, "New Queer Cinema," gives a historical background to the rise of gay and lesbian movies in major film studios in America. Since the 1940s there has always been American gay and lesbian movies made outside the major film industry. In the 1950s, independent low-budget films gained recognition, opposed by society and the film industry, became known as "underground films." Later in the 60s, homosexual themes from underground films began to appear in mainstream studios. With recognition from major studios came funds to establish the first gay and lesbian film festival in the 1970s. Victoria Amador's article, "Changing Reels: Positive Gay/Lesbian Images In 1990s American Cinema," points out that in 1982, 20th Century Fox was the first major film studio to produce a lovemaking movie that was unique for showing sex between two young men. Then, in the early 1990's, the term "New Queer Cinema" was coined by B. Ruby Rich as she wrote commentary on the Sundance Film Festival. Chin argues that "New Queer Cinema" is aggressive in asserting homosexual identity and queer culture that adheres to Amador's assertion that cinema mirrors the movement of a culture and movies can misshape a culture. As the 21st Century hits, major film industry continues to convey gay and lesbian films in terms of the stereotypes that society upholds.

There Goes The Bride.
**IMAGINE
ME&YOU**



Twentieth Century Fox took on "New Queer Cinema" in 2005 and produced the romantic comedy *Imagine Me & You*—a film about a woman named Rachel, who notices her attraction to another woman, Luce, while walking down the aisle on her wedding day. At the end, we come to see that Rachel is forced to make decision when her husband, Heck, finds out. She chooses to have a life with Luce and Heck is totally understanding as he moves on with his life. There is a different twist to the major film *Brokeback Mountain*. The main plot of *Brokeback Mountain* is about two men, Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist, who live in Wyoming during the 1960s and develop an intimate relationship. For many years they keep their intimacy limited to make sure no one finds out because society's lack of acceptance for homosexual acts. Jack is married and has a son and Ennis is divorced, develops intimate relationships with women throughout the movie, and has a daughter. It is apparent that both men engage in heterosexual activity to the public eye but careful to maintain the secrecy of their romance. Over the years, they lose contact and both move on living heterosexual lives as married men. The movie ends in tragedy when Jack is killed because of, what Ennis believes to have happened as a hate crime, a brutal beating.

American romance in the major film industry depicts gay and lesbian themes differently based on gender but display similarities as well; this can be analyzed in comparing the same-sex romance in *Imagine Me & You* and *Brokeback Mountain*. Both Rachel and Luce appear to be straight as they conform to heterosexual ideals of feminine appearance. This is the same for Jack and Ennis. Brod Harry's article, "They're Bi Shepherds, not Gay Cow-



boys: the Misframing of *Brokeback Mountain*, makes a critical analysis of how Ennis is portrayed as an image of the hyper masculine Marlboro cowboy icon which upholds the film industries reflection of society's view of the fine distinction between feminine gender and masculine gender.

Ennis and Jack never speak of having emotions toward each other or even mention what they have is love. Brod Harry points out that they talk about it as a "thing" that has overcome them. However, when the romance was between two women, their characters expressed deep emotion and actual love for each other that was not denied of its existence. This represents the stereotype that women are emotionally unstable and are more acceptable in having an open same-sex relationship. Here, both movies show the idea that "New Queer Cinema" presents sexuality as something that can unexplainably change without gender and sex taking on new forms of identity. ▲

ANNOUNCING . . . THE BISEXUAL LAMBDA LITERARY AWARDS

And the Nominees are...

Eros by Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio (Harrington Park Press)
Five Married Men by Martin Brant (I-Universe)
Jesus in Love by Kittredge Cherry (AndroGyne Press)
Affirmative Psychotherapy with Bisexual Women & Men by Ronald Fox
(Harrington Park Press)
Stolen by Annette Lapointe (Anvil Press)
Spin Control by Chris Moriarty (Bantam Spectra)
Three Sides to Every Story by Clarence Nero (Harlem Moon/Doubleday)
Incognito Street by Barbara Sjöholm (Seal Press)
Doo-Long Love by Chad Sosna (I-Universe)
Bi Guys, edited by Ron Jackson Suresha (Harrington Park Press)
Bi Men, edited by Ron Jackson Suresha & Pete Chvany (Harrington Park)
The Bisexual's Guide to the Universe, Michael Szymanski & Nicole Kristal
(Alyson)

The Lambda Literary Foundation, the country's leading organization for LGBT literature, received a record number of nominations for books for this year's awards. In all, 147 publishers nominated 381 titles for awards in 25 categories. The complete list of nominated books is available at the Lambda Lit Foundation web site at www.lambdaliterary.org. The top finalists in each category will be announced on March 1, and the winners will be announced on Thursday, May 31, at a gala awards ceremony in New York City.

T A K E N O T E 2007

by Ellyn Ruthstrom

Boston Bisexuals Have a Great Year Ahead! The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) is revving up for another year of events, support and social groups, and coalition work with other LGBT and ally groups—locally and nationally. In December, the new board of directors was elected. Linda Blair, Luigi Ferrer, and Arthur Cohen are returning members from the 2006 board. Ron Suresha and Laurie Wolfe are brand new members, and I am returning to the board after about a 3-year hiatus. Officers were also elected: Linda Blair, treasurer; Luigi Ferrer, clerk; and myself as the board president.



Boundless Event about relationships at Club Cafe, March 9

Annual BRC House Party: March/April, TBA

Bayard Rustin Breakfast, AIDS Action Committee with GLBT communities of color and allies, April 28, 10 am - 1 pm, Kennedy Library

Boston Pride: Saturday, June 9, BBWN Pre-Pride Brunch and BRC booth, the Commons

Celebrate Bisexuality Day: September 23

National Coming Out Day: October 11

Creating Change Conference (The Task Force's national GLBT activist conference): November 7-11, Detroit, Michigan

Transcending Boundaries Conference: bisexual/pansexual, trans/genderqueer, and intersex people and allies, Fall 2007

If you are looking to connect on an ongoing basis you may be looking for some BLiSS. That's the Bisexual Social and Support (BLiSS) Group that meets the first Wednesday and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. The first Wednesday meetings combine topics, speakers, discussion, and announcements about or related to bisexuality in a supportive and confidential space. Thursdays have an hour check-in and then the group goes out to a local place for eats and socializing. The BRC will continue to be involved with the usual LGBT visibility events around Boston and the country, but it can't do it successfully without the support of its involved members. If you want to become more involved with the BRC, here are a few possible ways you could contribute your time and energy:

- Staff BRC's Pride booth and meet thousands of GLBT revelers on the Boston Common (June 9th)
- Join the Event Committee and help plan various local events
- Join any of the BRC committees and find out more about the work of the BRC
- Help coordinate fundraising or merchandise mailings
- Be a potential bisexual speaker who can go out into the community and talk about the BRC, bi visibility, and other issues ▲

**What are you interested in contributing to the bi community?
Drop me an e-mail at nellythrustmor@comcast.net and let me
know you are interested in getting involved.**



January brunch at Carla and Megan's

D A T E S T O R E M E M B E R

May 12, Saturday
BBWN brunch at
Robyn's in JP at noon.
Please bring a brunch
dish or drinks to share.
Call or email
Robyn for directions
and to let her know
you are coming: 617-
413-2717 or
ochs@fas.harvard.edu



BIWOMEN MAILING

Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Contact Katrina at katp32@yahoo.com or 617.833.3035 to find out the location for the stuffing.



**March 25, Sunday
BBWN brunch at
Deb's in Arlington
at noon.**

**Please bring a dish
or drinks to share.
Call or email Deb
for further direc-
tions and to let her
know you are com-
ing: 781-777-1054
or
debmo345@gmail.**

ONGOING EVENTS

1st Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Be sure to confirm the time and date by calling 617-354-8807. Please call for meeting topics and other information

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Note: THIS IS A CLOSED GROUP. Please contact Denise at 508-315-3176 or email Marblesdgp@rcn.com

1st Wednesdays,

3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

THE LAST NOTE

Dear ABC,

I was recently shocked to hear a bisexual slur uttered by the character Kevin in Episode 12: "Sexual Politics" on the show "Brothers & Sisters." Kevin is with his sister and brother while he speculates as to whether his latest interest, 'Chad,' is gay or straight. His sister suggests, "Maybe he's Bi?" to which Kevin replies, "No one's Bi! Have you ever met a seventy year-old Bisexual? At some point, you make a choice; thus the expression: 'Bi now, Gay later.'"

I was really offended by this very virulent statement against bisexuals. As a bisexual woman, I went from feeling thrilled to see a gay relationship issue portrayed in a very honest way to feeling personally attacked and discredited in the very next scene. It was very uncomfortable and made me quite astounded at the virulence of Kevin's verbal attack on bisexuals. To let a comment of that debasing and dismissive nature slide without any kind of check by either of the other two characters was to basically state that this is an accepted view by the writers of the show.

There are many, many elderly bisexuals. Researcher Fritz Klein was bisexual and was 72 when he died. I believe ABC and the writers and producers of "Brothers & Sisters" should take the responsibility of presenting bisexuals in a realistic and honest way, rather than allowing unfounded and defamatory statements to rest unchallenged. This mistake can be ameliorated by showing Kevin with a better understanding of bisexuality. I hope that ABC will take this step; I've enjoyed watching "Brothers & Sisters" from the beginning but my feelings about this episode have tainted my experience.

Best Regards,
Laurie A. Garner

Send your
comments
to ABC:

<http://abc.go.com/site/contactus.html>

BiWomen



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BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA
02140



LANI KA'AHUMANU HONORED FOR LIFE OF ACTIVISM

BY ELLYN RUTHSTROM

After hearing she would be receiving a "Life-time Friend and Champion Award" from the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, Lani Ka'ahumanu thought, "I'm too young! There is so much more to do." With more than four decades of activism under her belt, Lani's work on many different issues deserves just such an honor from her community. She'll accept the award on May 24th in San Francisco with other bi activists in attendance.

When asked about what she is most proud of in her many years of activism, Lani said she has a great sense of pride that the bisexual movement NEVER allowed gay and lesbian leaders and/or organizations to separate us from the early organizing efforts of transgender activists and that we stood up for B and T inclusion.

Looking back over the years, Lani pointed out some of the many highlights in her social change work.

1960s

Working with Another Mother For Peace and United Farm Worker's grape boycott.

1970s

Founding organizer of the San Francisco State Women Studies Department and serving on the Women Studies Hiring Committee that got Angela Davis back in the California university system.

1980s

Founding BiPOL, a bisexual feminist political action group focused on challenging the misinformation and scapegoating of bisexual people in what would become the HIV/AIDS pandemic.



1990s

Conceiving and producing the first National Bisexual Conference in 1990 which birthed BiNET USA, Being co-editor of *Bi Any Other Name*. Conceiving and organizing the successful 12-city endorsement campaign to get bisexual added to the title of the 1993 March on Washington for GLB Equal Rights and Liberation.

Into the Future:

Anticipated publication of Lani's activist memoirs *My Grassroots Are Showing*, in 2010

And the frustrations of so many years of work? Lani offered that "Being a pioneer you have to walk a fine line between that and tokenism. Many times being a pioneer is the same as being a token. I could feel the difference in my gut and knew who had my back. Many times no one had my back -- even if people said they did. Early on I was fortunate to have a supportive mixed gender core of seven radical, progressive, creative, feminist identified, out of the closet bisexual activists and organizers—BiPOL in the 80s. We sparked each other and pulled off many wild political actions!"



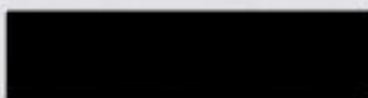


Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the summer of '07, a season in which Pride festivals flourish, summer reading lists are created, and BBQ utensils are unpacked.

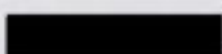
As we enter into June, it seems fitting to have a Pride issue, although looking back through the newsletters over this past year, it seems EVERY issue has been a Pride issue. We have much to be proud of as I hope this issue exemplifies. Bi activists are being honored for their achievements, bi arts and culture continue to grow, and LGBT organizations are beginning to remember the Bs amongst them.

Happy Pride Everyone!



BiWomen is published quarterly.

Editor:



All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities, and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.



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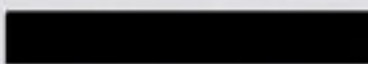
PLEASE SUBMIT TO:

BiWomen

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news, and views to:

P.O. Box 400639
Cambridge, MA 02140

or via email to



If you do not want your name published, please tell us.

DEADLINE: MAY 1, 2007

**IN THE NEXT
ISSUE:**

Bi Books

**Calling all book reviews
and recommendations**

CONGRATS ROBYN!

On May 16, The Stonewall Center of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst presented its 2007 "Continuing the Legacy of Stonewall" Award to Robyn Ochs. The plaque inscription says that the award is "to recognize the difference you have made for LGBT People."

"Robyn has probably done more than any other person in the U.S. and perhaps even the world to educate the general public about bisexuality. She compiled and edited the international Bisexual Resource Guide, which has enabled thousands of bisexuals to find each other and bi-supportive organizations. She has taught some of the first college courses on bisexuality. She has given countless workshops and presentations at colleges, conferences, and just about any place that will have her. And every decade or so, when the mainstream media rediscovers that bisexuals exist, Robyn patiently answers their often uninformed questions and lets them know that bisexuality is not a phase, not a fence, and not a fad. The Stonewall Center is proud to present its "Continuing the Legacy of Stonewall" award to tonight's graduation speaker, Robyn Ochs."

—Brett-Genny Beemyn, Director of the Stonewall Center, The University of Massachusetts, Amherst. May 16, 2007



A poem

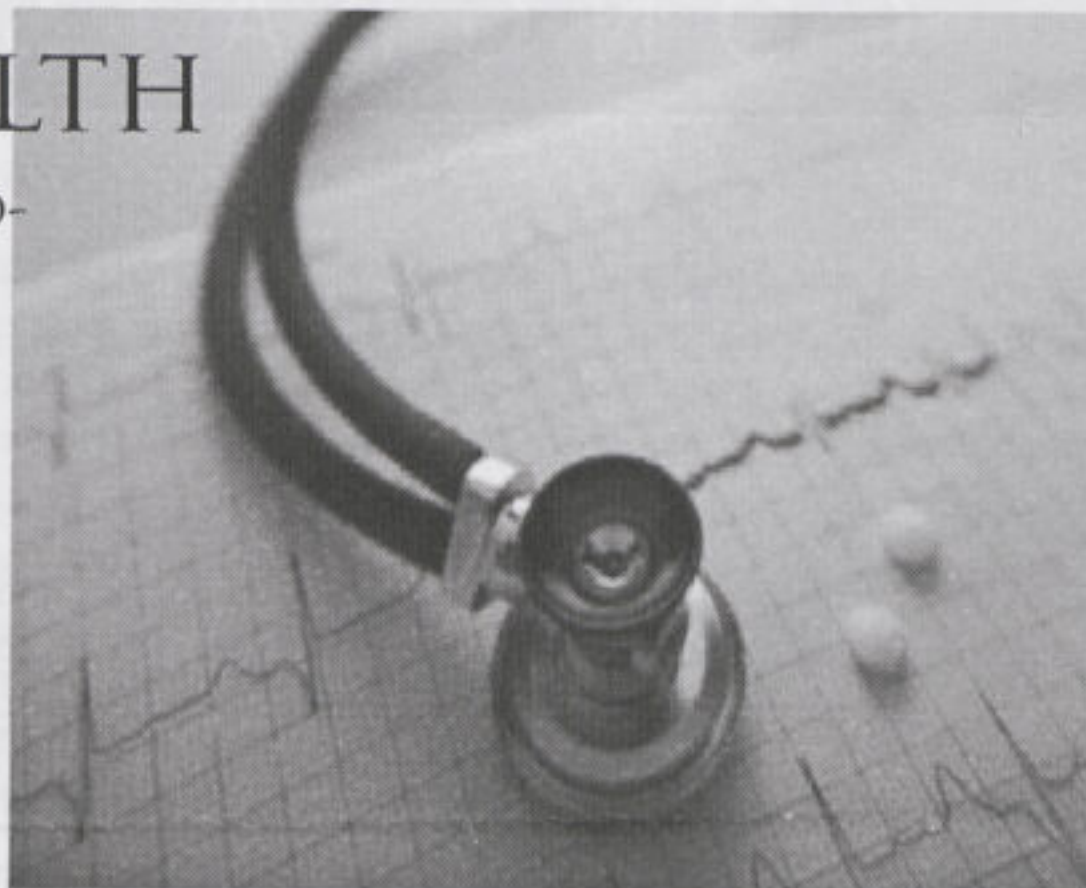
I wish I had the strength a touch of your hand gives.
I wish I had the energy one of your smiles creates.
I wish I could see the sparkle of love and kindness in your eyes.
I wish I could hear the music your voice elicits.
I wish.

—Elizabeth Tanner

Elizabeth is a 37-year-old bisexual married woman who lives with her husband of 16 years, 6-year-old daughter and mother. She has worked in the financial industry for 8 years and dabbles with writing. She is a local community activist who attends the Out & Equal Workplace Summit for her work. Her interests include reading, writing, friends, community, and family.

BISEXUAL HEALTH

AN INTRODUCTION AND MODEL PRACTICES FOR HIV/STI PREVENTION PROGRAMMING



New report available from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, BiNet USA and the Fenway Institute at Fenway Community Health, released in conjunction with National LGBT Health Awareness Week.

“This report was born out of the grassroots efforts of countless bisexual activists, organizers, health care professionals, researchers and educators, who for more than 35 years have struggled to bring about greater visibility, understanding and inclusion of bisexuality. The bisexual perspective is sorely missing from public health discourse.”

— Luigi Ferrer, BiNet USA

WASHINGTON, March 13 — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, in collaboration with the Fenway Institute at Fenway Community Health in Boston, Mass., and BiNet USA, today released a groundbreaking report titled *Bisexual Health: An Introduction and Model Practices for HIV/STI Prevention Programming*.

Government-sponsored research clearly confirms the existence of a significant bisexual population in the United States. According to a recent analysis of data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, which was sponsored by the Center for Disease Control, 1.8 percent of men and 2.8 percent

of women ages 18 to 44 identify as bisexual. Additionally, 12.9 percent of women and 5.9 percent of men ages 18 to 44 said they were attracted to both sexes. Nonetheless, the health care needs of bisexuals, as well as men who have sex with men and women (MSMW) and women who have sex with men and women (WSMW) but do not identify as bisexual, have been largely ignored and under represented in academic and professional literature. This report fills this pressing and unacceptable void.

In the report's first chapter, co-author and sex educator Amy André answers key questions, including “What is bisexuality?” and “How many people in the U.S. identify as bisexual or are attracted to both men and women?” Intersections of race, ethnicity and bisexuality are also explored, including the sensationalized and purported “down low” phenomenon. An explanation of the impact of biphobia and bi invisibility on health is followed by a brief review of available academic literature on issues affecting the health of bisexuals, with a focus on HIV/STI prevention. For example, research shows that many bisexuals have negative experiences with health care providers, whether because they are afraid to come out as bisexual to their providers, or because their providers give them improper or incomplete information on HIV/STI prevention.

"Bisexual people have suffered the blows of discrimination far too long. It is absolutely overdue that we open the door of the 21st century and address the realities of the lives of bisexual people. Bi invisibility and biphobia have a profound effect on the health of bisexual people. It goes without saying that a population forced to keep its behavior and identity a secret is less likely to receive vital, lifesaving information about HIV/STI prevention," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

KEY CONCEPTS

The report also addresses the need for HIV/STI prevention programs that are inclusive of bisexual people through a chapter about the groundbreaking work of Marshall Miller and Julie Ebin at the BiHealth Program at Fenway Community Health. Model theories, policies and practices that health care providers and activists can replicate at HIV/STI prevention programs nationwide include:

- The difference between behavior and identity
- Safer-sex brochure distribution
- Bisexual and Bi-curious Men's Group
- Safer-sex educator team

RECOMMENDATIONS: This report concludes with recommendations for creating a more bi-friendly culture, particularly in the provision of HIV/STI prevention services, including: Providers of HIV/STI prevention programs and services, counselors and therapists should create programs and outreach materials that specifically target men who have sex with men and women (MSMW) and women who have sex with men and women (WSMW). Researchers and journalists should avoid sensationalizing stories and research and should include bisexual people's perspectives.

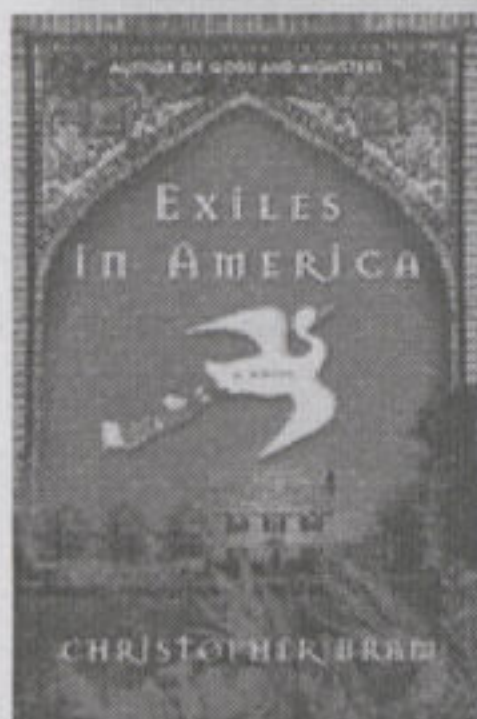
The Task Force would like to recognize and thank the advisory committee for this report, whose guidance, contributions and expertise were vital to its completion and production: Pete Chvany, Ph.D.; Loraine Hutchins, Ph.D., Co-chair; Lani Ka'ahumanu, Co-chair; Denise Penn, M.S.W.; and Ramki Ramakrishnan, Ph.D.



BRUNCH COORDINATOR WANTS YOU TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.

Book Review



Exiles in America
by Christopher Bram
HarperCollins: 2006. 371 pages.

When art professor Daniel convinces his partner Zach to invite to dinner their new neighbors, an Iranian artist and his wife, he recalls that when they moved to their small Virginia college town, no one extended a hand. The two men, married in all but name for twenty-one years, expect their guests to be pious Muslims. But Abbas and Elena Rohani are wine-drinking, European-educated intellectuals; both are bisexual, and, like Zach and Daniel, they have an open marriage.

When Abbas and Daniel tumble into a scorching affair, Zach and Elena develop a wary friendship. Does Abbas love Daniel or just need to be loved? Is Daniel in love or only afraid of being old? What's the difference between lovers and sex buddies, between friendship and romance? How does a long-term relationship endure, and at what cost?

With these questions and others, Christopher Bram has built his novel as a meditation on marriage, particularly queer relationships that lack exterior guides and support. Opening with Robert Louis Stevenson's definition of marriage ("A sort of friendship recognized by the police"), the book traces the affair's repercussions on both Daniel and Zach's tepid partnership and Abbas and Eleni's stormy one.

This is a book of conversations—arguments, pillow talk, dinner-table exchanges—whose characters constantly parse the complexities of their changing relationships. "I never fell in love, but one day I woke up and understood that I loved him," one character explains. In other words, it's a novel for people who love to read about people who love to talk. In a

realistic reflection of both queer community and a small town, entanglements in others' relationships and decisions of how much to tell a lover or friend are all-important.

Most of the book is devoted to subtle shifts in emotional temperature among the four central characters, each of whom Bram sculpts in three dimensions. Elena, a poet and former political prisoner, is a fascinating figure whose intelligence and brutal honesty about her own shortcomings endears her to Zach and to the reader. Her relationship with Abbas, a temperamental artist still tugged by cultural ties he claims to have cut, is complex and combustible. Though neither spouse is a bisexual role model, and some readers might misread their marriage as the compromise of a gay man and lesbian in an unaccepting culture, the book affirms the existence of bisexuality in both subtle and explicit ways. Both Abbas and Elena have stronger sexual connections to their own genders, but their love is real, if potentially self-destructive—a contrast to the safe and sexless relationship of the two men.

Bram's true focus is on this second marriage, between exuberant artist Daniel, who can't help telling his partner more than he wants to hear, and the steadier Zach, a gentle psychiatrist whose professional perspective both helps and distances him from the people he loves. As in Carol Anshaw's novel *Seven Moves*, in which a lesbian therapist deals with the sudden disappearance of her partner, Zach's encounters with his patients punctuate the book, and add both humor and perspective to his relationship struggles.

For the first three-quarters of the book those personal tensions generate all suspense. But the book, which begins in September 2002, is set on the eve of the Second Iraq War, and as it draws to its climax, all the characters must grapple with the dangers of being Iranian, queer, or non-monogamous in a country under the Patriot Act.

Bram chose to tell this story in the

omniscient voice—the point of view of the author. It's a daring decision, as most contemporary fiction uses the limited third-person or first-person. Partly that's because literature limited to one person's perspective suits our postmodern world—but it's also because the omniscient is extremely difficult to write (especially with few contemporary models). I'm glad Bram took the risk, but it doesn't always work.

To establish the omniscient narration, Bram tells his story in a simple, declarative voice—a deliberate stylistic decision that tells as often as it shows. Most of the time this storyteller's voice works, but occasionally it lapses into over-explanation.

More seriously, although an omniscient author can see into any character's head, and comment on the story by addressing the reader directly, Bram so often limits himself to Daniel or Zach's perspective that his occasional authorial comments seem out of place. His authorial presence is so subtle that a reader could easily miss it and be surprised by its reappearance at the end.

I wish that voice had been a more integral part of the story, that Bram had taken more risks, for example, playing with his own (and the reader's) foreknowledge of the war with Iraq.

Yet despite these flaws, I found the book gripping and thought-provoking—the kind of read one longs to share with a friend. I will seek out some of Bram's other novels (*The Notorious Dr. August*, perhaps, or *Gods and Monsters*), but I will also think of his characters the next time my friends and I discuss the vagaries of love.

“Every marriage is its own country,” Zach tells another character. *Exiles in America* is a passport to visit two such countries, and the human souls who inhabit them.

—Sarah E. Rowley





BBWN BRUNCH BBQ BOOK SWAP

WHEN: SUNDAY, JULY 22, NOON
WHERE: AT ELLYN'S PLACE IN
BROCKTON.

Are you ready for the annual BBWN Book Swap? Bring a few books to swap with others at the brunch and you'll go home with some great summer reading. We'll crank up the grill and have space for some outdoor games. If you want to eat meat you will have to bring your own. REPEAT: BRING YOUR OWN MEAT. There will be veggie burgers, condiments, buns, some drinks, and a side dish provided. Please bring other side dishes and drinks to share with the group. Email Ellyn for directions at nellythrustmor@comcast.net. If there is bad weather we can move the brunch inside.

Ode to Nan Goldin

Oh Nan Goldin
Of the super saturated colors
You don't take pretty pictures
Of beaches or kittens
No posing
Your photographs
Are more like a diary
You tell the story
Of your life
As it's unfolding
There is no fake smiling for the camera
Or stopping to put on lipstick
Oh Nan Goldin
Your photographs of messy hotel rooms
Shocked me
A lot more than the couples
Of various genders
Making love
In fact, I think you did a series
Of unmade beds
With stuff strewn all over
The twisted bedclothes
I wondered
Why I ever felt guilty
For being lax
About hospital corners
O Nan Goldin
Your giant photos
Took over an entire floor
Of the Whitney Museum
O Nan Goldin
Who wrote the words
"I am bisexual"
On the wall of the Whitney Museum
When I read those black letters on the white wall of the Whitney
I felt a rush
My whole body quivered
And I started to cry
Uncontrollably
You spoke the truth
Of your life
And even your
Hotel room's messy bed
In your art

And on this day
 Your truth
 Spoke to my truth
 And said
 Your truth is worthy
 Worthy of the wall of the Whitney Museum
 And nobody stopped you
 A museum committee didn't gather together
 And pronounce the words:
 Not allowed
 They didn't apply an eraser or white out or a can of white paint
 They didn't stick to the party line
 Birth Death Marriage Career Famous Friends Mentor Colleagues and Influences
 Skipping right over
 Bisexuality
 Or only hinting
 As I recently saw at the Met
 Queer paintings hanging from the wall
 If your gaydar is sharp enough to notice
 With only veiled commentary from the curators
 The Don't Ask Don't Tell policy
 Of Museums everywhere
 Of Everywhere everywhere, really
 Like the Alice Walker film
 I saw with my son's high school class
 In which she was straight
 Her history of husbands
 Was in the film
 And her daughter, Rebecca
 Also bisexual
 But not in the film
 Or the Frida Kahlo biography
 That lists all of her male lovers
 By name
 There are entire chapters
 Devoted to them
 But none to the women
 Who aren't even mentioned by name
 Who aren't even mentioned
 Except for the librarian
 Whose name we still don't know
 Bisexuality is only discussed
 In about two paragraphs
 Or less
 In the whole 528 pages
 Of Frida Kahlo's biography
 But I digress
 O Nan Goldin of the super saturated colors
 Who pronounced that the DSM III was incorrect

It's not Gender Dysphoria
 You said
 It's Gender Euphoria
 You said
 Gender should not be dissed
 It should be used as a drug
 Speaking of which
 How many drugs did you stick up your arm?
 O Nan Goldin
 Thank god that's over because
 How many role models have we really got?
 And you are so Art World Important
 That every newspaper and every magazine had to write about you
 And because you are so bisexual
 They had to say:
 "The bisexual artist Nan Goldin"
 Or the
 "Bisexual photographer Nan Goldin"
 In their article
 They couldn't get away
 With saying you are gay
 Or straight
 As so often happens
 But not when you write the words
 "I am bisexual"
 On the wall
 Of the Whitney Museum
 O Nan Goldin
 High Art was based on you
 Except you're not dead
 But they used your photos as stand-ins
 For Ally Sheedy
 Whose mother is a lesbian
 And who said in a magazine

"I...always felt
 that the person I was going to fall in love with
 was going to be
 the person that I fell in love with.
 I never had a preconception
 that it would have to be a man
 or that it would have to be a woman."
 It was Curve Magazine, in fact
 where the quote was printed
 But I digress
 The Ballad of Sexual Dependency
 Your slide show
 Is still in their collection
 I saw it there the other day
 On a date with a tranny girl
 That didn't work out
 She had bad breath
 But knew a thing or two about art
 She cut school and went to art galleries instead
 At dinner I felt disoriented
 I had no idea
 What she had under her skirt
 I realized that I don't usually have to wonder
 What someone's got
 Under the table
 In fact, I never thought about it
 Before
 But I digress
 In The Ballad of Sexual Dependency
 You documented love and bruises
 No prettying up for the camera
 Bruises seemed popular
 With your social set
 I'm glad you dumped him
 Or did he dump you?
 The bastard!
 In any case
 He's out of your life
 And you moved on
 To happier times
 You had girlfriends
 The lady in the bathtub
 For instance
 And someone else
 I'm not sure who
 It was a decade ago
 When I saw the show
 I can't remember everything

And I couldn't afford the art book
 Then
 So many of your friends
 Came down with AIDS
 Or AIDS came down with them
 Some would say
 Put down the camera
 Its goulish
 To keep them in the lens
 You should let them die in peace
 But you didn't flinch
 You showed the love
 They received from friends--family, really
 And the deterioration
 The wasting
 And the end
 We learned what we had not experienced ourselves
 Or saw reflected what we had
 As art
 On the wall
 Of the Whitney Museum
 "I'll be your mirror," you offered
 So what do I see?
 O Nan Goldin
 Of the jewish name
 The jewish nose
 And the kinky hair
 I see myself in you
 And when your life
 Is up
 On the wall
 Of the Whitney
 It reflects
 My self
 Back to me

—Sheela Lambert

Sheela Lambert is a free-lance writer,
 bisexuality educator and long-time bi
 activist living in New York City with her
 son and her dust collection. She is the
 founder of the Bi Writers Association.

D A T E S T O R E M E M B E R



12-week group "Exploring Sexual Identity" in Boston Area
Ongoing, cyclical group for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and others who are working on issues related to their sexuality. General questions are "How do I feel about who I am?" and "What do I do now?" Also, societal and internal homophobia/biphobia, families relationships, workplace issues, friendship and dating, community supports and resources. The group is usually a mixture of men and women, a broad range of ages and cultural identities.

Call
Jean Chapin Smith, 617-876-2113
or
Kevin Cranston, 617-236-1163

BIWOMEN MAILING

Can you say label, stuff, and seal? Help BBWN get the newsletter out to women around the country. Contact Katrina at katp32@yahoo.com or 617.833.3035 to find out the location for the stuffing.

ONGOING EVENTS

1st Tuesdays:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Be sure to confirm the time and date by calling 617-354-8807. Please call for meeting topics and other information

2nd Tuesdays:

Married Bi Women's Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Note: THIS IS A CLOSED GROUP. Please contact Denise at 508-315-3176 or email Marblesdgp@rcn.com

1st Wednesdays,

3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.



TAKE NOTE

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH, 9:30-11:30

BOSTON PRIDE DAY! Come get psyched for the day at the annual Pre-Pride Brunch thrown by BBWN on the morning of Pride. This year the parade starts in the South End so we changed the brunch's location. We'll gather at the Boston Living Center in the George Johnson Room to kick off the day! Sliding scale donation of \$5-15 at the door. Food and drink provided. See old friends and meet some new ones! Would you like to help volunteer to make this a great event? Email nellythrustmor@comcast.net to lend a hand or for more info.



Linda Blair (left) and Robyn Ochs (right) celebrate 3 years of marriage equality in Massachusetts at a May 17th Party for Equality

BiWomen



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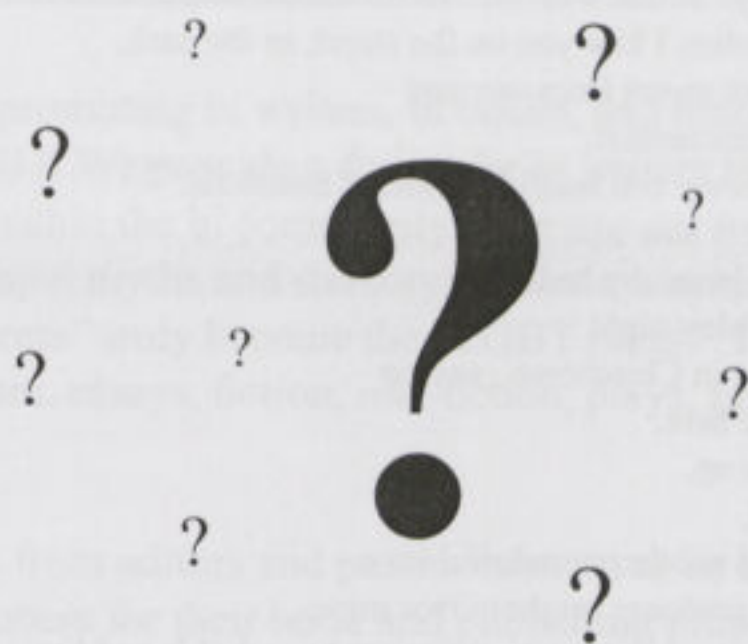
What is Biphobia? by Kimberly Steele "The B Word Poet"

bi-pho-bi-a [bye-foh-bee-uh]

n.

1. unreasoning fear of or antipathy toward bisexuals or bisexuality
2. behavior based on such a feeling

Imagine this scene for a minute. It's late night Saturday and you decide to jump on Megaphone chatelaine. You press 3 to perform a match and then 3 again for relationships. Hey, you never know whose out there right? The first ad you listen to specifically asks for Bisexuals not to reply. The second one as well. The third one...and so forth. Did you miss something? Most of the ads stated no reason—they just don't want responses from Bisexuals. How unfair is that? Bi stereotypes is one of the phobias that is almost more discriminating than Homophobia because not only do straight people think less on Bisexuality but Gays and Lesbians do as well. Bi stereotypes are stemmed from 3 sources: hearsay, experience, and ignorance. People hear from their friends the pain of their partner leaving them for the same sex or the opposite sex. Everyone knows Ellen DeGeneres' pain all too well after Anne Heche left her for her now ex husband Coley Laffoon. Those who go through this experience often tend to generalize all Bisexual individuals as people who "sit on the fence" or "like their cake and eat it too" or any other degrading slogan that has been thrown at Bisexuals over the years. Then there is just ignorance of the fact that not everyone in one group thinks and behaves the same way. It is surprising that Gays and Lesbians always argue the fact that they do not fit stereotypes. They are the very ones quick to believe that Bisexuals fit one stereotype! It may shock people to realize that we are all on the same side. We are all trying to convince straight people that



we are capable of forming true and lasting relationships. That we are not confused. That we should not be considered a human sex toy for couples. That we believe in marriage equality and adoption and non-discrimination in the workplace. We too had to choose whether to come out to spouses and families. It's true that some of us haven't come out and fit some unflattering stereotypes pushed on us by Gays, Lesbians, and Straight people. Then again, there are some Gays and Lesbians that haven't come out and fit some unflattering stereotypes as well. This commentary is primarily to raise awareness for this specific issue in the Bi community. For more ways to combat BiPhobia and increase Bi visibility, check out www.biresource.org.

Kimberly Steele is Founder of Bisexual Network of Greater Cleveland.

Equal Marriage
Massachusetts, 2004
by Julie Ebin

Just because you wear a man's skin –
five o'clock shadow,
bulgy lump
in your throat –
when we met
we could easily dream: happily-ever-after rings and ceremonies.
There was no need to pause to think Oh! We'll get government benefits!
Four years back when I met Molly,
I had murkier visions:
What will my mother...?
A ceremony with two dresses or a dress and a tux?
If I get hit by a bus, will the hospital bar her from my room?
Will I always notice who sees us on the subway?
With you, when I kiss you on the street, in the park,
we might get stares from voyeurs
or puritan discomfort,
but we've never felt fearful of others' reactions.
How unlike it was with Molly
who shook loose my hand
one balmy May night
on the street in Chinatown, saying
It's not safe here.
If we broke up,
if you died,
I might find another wonderful love –
one whose anatomy might mirror mine.
Although in committing to share our households and lives,
we could be blessed by family, friends,

even our faith,
we would get no automatic earthly protection
from this country's laws.
So at the statehouse you and I rally
to protect each of us as much as others.
A bisexual married friend
opts out with a sign saying "Straight Ally,"
showing up in support, but invisible behind his safe façade.
Holding your hand I wonder,
as the protesters' spit lands
on my cheek, on your shoe,
whether the glob was hawked up for me as a "faggot-lover"
or if they can see beyond our different genders,
if they know I too am queer.
And does our side? Do they know
why being here matters to me?
The next morning I see a sticker
on a pickup truck parked down the street:
"God Says: 1 Man + 1 Woman = Marriage."
And even though you are 1 man
and I am 1 woman
I still
feel afraid.

Julie Ebin is a bi poet and activist writing and working in
the Boston area. She likes to dance and play and lives with
0 cats.

This poem is reprinted from The Fence with permission.
For more on The Fence, go to <http://www.thefence.ca/issue%208.htm>.

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newsletter are copyrighted by the
authors and artists.

BiWomen is published quarterly.

Editor:
[REDACTED]

The Boston Bisexual Women's
Network is a feminist, not-for-profit
collective organization whose
purpose is to bring women together
for support and validation. It is meant
to be a safe environment in which
women of all sexual self-identities,
class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and
religious groups, ages, abilities, and
disabilities are welcome. Through
the vehicles of discussion, support,
education, outreach, political
action and social groups related
to bisexuality, we are committed
to the goals of full acceptance as
bisexuals within the gay and lesbian
community and to full acceptance of
bisexuality and the liberation of all
gay people within the larger society.

PLEASE SUBMIT TO:

BiWomen

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-
white art, news, and views to:

P.O. Box 400639

Cambridge, MA 02140

or via email to [REDACTED]

If you do not want your name published, please tell
us.

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1, 2007

**IN THE NEXT
ISSUE:**

Comint Out as Bi

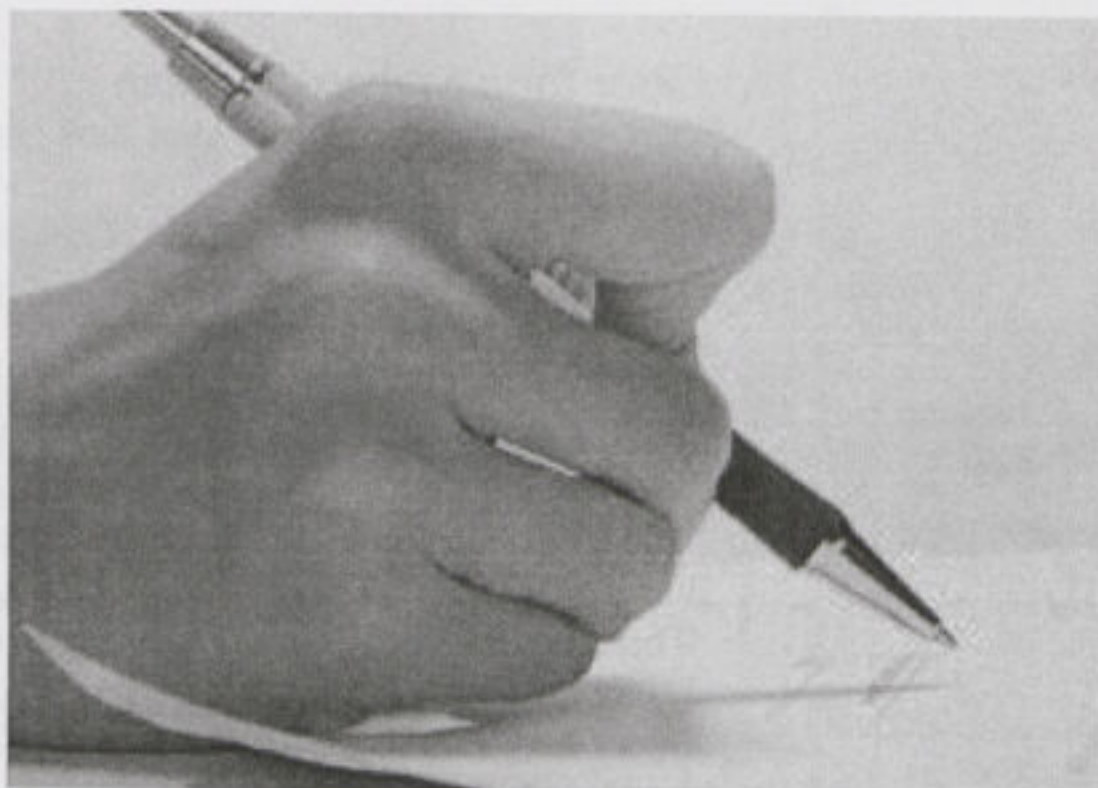
**Tell us your Coming Out
Story!**



PRINTED ON
RECYCLED PAPER

Bi Writers Association

Working to put the "B" in LGBT



The Bi Writers Association (BWA) is the foremost voice promoting bi writers, bi books, and bisexual writing in America. We are working to put the "B" in LGBT. We provide a forum for bi writers to network with each other, increase awareness of our writing within the bi community, promote our writing in the LGBT community and to use our word power to dispel myths and stereotypes about bisexuality in both the gay and mainstream press and to help the "gay press" truly become the "LGBT press." This association includes writers in all genres including journalism, essays, fiction, non-fiction, plays, poetry, TV and movie scripts, songwriting, and erotica.

The Bi Writers Association receives Call for Submissions from editors and passes them on to its members. BWA also publishes Call for Submissions from members for their book and publishing projects. We publish links to member blogs and websites.

The Bi Writers Association ran a successful campaign convincing Lambda Literary Foundation to add a Bisexual category for a book award at the annual "Lammy" Awards, the first in their 19-year history. From now on, every year there will be up to 5 bisexual book finalists and one winner. They have also added many new bi judges to their roster from a list we provided, increasing their bi judges tenfold.

The Bi Writers Association organized their first event on June 1st: Bi Lines: A Celebration of Bisexual Writing in Reading, Music and Culture. Bi Lines, a book reading for the Lammy Bisexual Book Award winner and finalists held in conjunction with the Lammy Awards, was a big success, packing one of the largest rooms at the NYC LGBT Center.

The Bi Writers Association is launching a media campaign to increase bi visibility while reducing myths and stereotypes about bisexual people. We are working with other media organizations to update their stylebooks and are creating our own Media Guide to Bisexuality and LGBT Reporting.

We are creating a bookstore on our site as well as posting book lists to help increase members book sales and increase awareness and accessibility of all bi-themed books.

Website: www.biwriters.org

Email: info@biwriters.org

Join biwriters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Pity for a Sighted Woman by Kelly Bailey

We were sitting in a booth at IHOP,
Eating breakfast for dinner, talking, the usual small talk on a first date.
We'd emailed and talked on the phone before,
So I thought I knew her well enough to trust
The tingles beginning to stir inside my body.

Then she dropped the bomb that turned the tingles into cold shivers, and
obliterated any
Spark that could have flared up into the full-fledged flame and fire of lust,
let alone love,
Inside me. She said, "I don't understand how you can convey feelings of
love
Without being able to look into someone else's eyes."

"You really think that's the only way to show love?" I asked,
As revulsion and pity for the poor sighted woman replaced desire and
curiosity.
Still I wanted to hope there was a way I could reach her.
"Close your eyes," I commanded, as I reached out with a hand to touch
hers.
I trailed my fingers over the back of her hand, up her wrist, over her
arm,
Deliberately caressing, making love to her skin with my fingertips.
"You are so beautiful, so beautiful," I half-crooned in my best sexy,
adoring voice,
My soft, silky, sliding up and down the scales with love for you voice,
I leaned towards her, breathing in her scent, pretending to be intoxicated
by it.
I let my breath go, praying it would tickle the hair at the nape of her
neck,
Long, silky, straight hair I'd played with earlier in the evening
Driving in her car, on the way to the restaurant.
I felt no guilt now, wishing it was thicker, had more body, and was
actually curly.

After a moment, I withdrew my hand, took another bite of my steak and
eggs,
Drank a sip of coffee, and said, "Well? What do you think?"

"That was interesting," she said, eating some more of her own food,
From the sound of her voice. "But it's still not the same."

"No, it's better, I would think," I said, feeling confident.

"No, it isn't. There's something in being able to gaze into someone else's
eyes,

Seeing their love for you, expressing your love for them, that you can't replace.

It goes beyond words, beyond anything I can describe to you.
Oh, I wish I could explain it better! You're missing so much!"

"I don't think so," I told her, my pity for her mounting.

"Didn't you feel anything as I was touching you? Didn't you notice
The way I was making love to you with my voice, and with the touch of
my hand?

Forgive me, but it seems to me like you're the one missing out on all the
sensations

You could be experiencing, when you're focused on only what your eyes
can tell you."

"I guess," she said, sounding unconvinced. I could feel her withdrawing
further from me,

And I marveled at the thought that such a limited creature could dare to
feel sorry for me.

"I understand what you're saying, but it's still not the same to me."

"Then you're wasting your time and mine," I told her. "Obviously, you
need to be

With a sighted person, and I need to be with a person who is at least
open to experiencing

My world and how it feels, and how it can open you up to things you didn't
know about."

We moved on to other subjects of conversation. We walked to Barnes
and Nobles,

And she read me book titles and excerpts from books of poetry by Shel
Silverstein.

And at some point she brought me home. I was sure she was going to
Drop me off, but she came inside, lay beside me on the bed,
Our feet dangling off the side, while my roommate watched TV quietly,
Trying to give us privacy. She pulled out a jar of lip balm,
Let me smudge some on my mouth, and I thought detachedly about
kissing her.

Then I dismissed the thought. Why in the hell would I want to kiss
Some poor sighted woman just because I felt sorry for her, when it was
crystal clear

That I'd stopped wanting her the minute she opened her mouth and
closed her mind

And insisted that eyeballing each other is the only relevant road to
romantic bliss?

Kelly Bailey is a beautiful blind woman who lives in California and has drawn her inspiration from the Black Is Beautiful / Black Power movement and created her own "Blind is Beautiful" movement. She fully embraced her bisexuality in 2003, and hasn't looked back since.



The Bisexual's Guide to the Universe
by Nicole Kristal and Mike Szymanski
Alyson Books, 2006
Reviewed by Ellyn Ruthstrom

"Greetings, fence-sitters, chameleons, switch-hitters, pansexuals, omnisexuals, bisexuals, whatever, and all those who loathe labels!" These are the first words to greet you in the preface to *The Bisexual's Guide to the Universe*, and they certainly reflect the irreverent tone that permeates the rest of the book. Forever to be noted as the book to receive the first Lambda Literary Book Award in the bisexual category, this guide walks the line (or should we say fence?) between providing practical information and poking fun at all things bisexual—and does it extremely well.

Separated into three sections—beginner, intermediate, and advanced—the book takes you from the basics of figuring out your own bisexuality to a "Bi-nal Exam" to confirm that you were paying attention throughout the book. Nicole and Mike share a great deal of personal relationship information throughout the book, which gives it a very realistic feel despite

all the laugh out loud humor. If you are new to bisexuality, I can see where the humor might be off-putting (when are you going to tell me the facts?), but I would suggest to keep reading; there is a lot of information to benefit from in between the jokes.

One of my favorite parts (I wonder why?) is the section about The Professional Bisexual. What makes a professional bisexual? "They lead support groups, create Web sites, write newsletters, and organize conferences where they sit around and talk about being bi. They've published books, speak at coffee shops, sing at schools, read really funny or heavy poetry, and put it all in their resumes without shame." Yup, that about sums it up. The writers wryly accuse the professional bisexual of being overly touchy about bi representation but still acknowledge that she/he is the best person to have with you to defend your bisexuality. I love their point about how difficult it is to visually represent bisexuality without pissing someone off. So true! But, the writers are also spot on about what constitutes biphobia, and I was so glad to see them take to task *The L Word* for its repeated missteps on bi representation.

You also get a lot of dating advice, a fabulous A-Z listing of celebrities who have had anything to do with bisexuality, the advantages and disadvantages of dating all sorts of sexualities, and tons more interesting stuff to amuse you for a few hours. Bring it to your next bi support group and try out the quizzes for some good laughs. And if you pass the Bi-nal Exam you get your official bisexual membership card!



Bi Presence at the LGBTI Health Summit

March 14-18 2007, Philadelphia

Julie Ebin Reporting



Bi Events included: "Missing In Action: Why is the B missing from most LGBTI Health Services?"; a Bisexual Town Hall meeting; and a presentation on the new BiNet USA-Task Force-Fenway Institute publication "Bisexual Health: An Introduction and Model Practices for HIV/STI Prevention Programming." Much conversation happened throughout the conference about bi issues; Blue, a bi activist from St. Louis, and Chris Bartlett, the main conference organizer, were both driving forces behind making bi issues more visible.

At the closing event, we rushed the stage, put up a bi flag and Cheryl Dobinson's Top 10 Bisexual Health Issues list, and did a performance piece. We even got a request to use the script at Pride in Arizona and a suggestion (by Joel Ginsburg, the ED of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association) to package it and take it on the road to every single conference, a la Vagina Monologues for conferences.

For more information on this event and materials used, contact Julie Ebin at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org

WANTED!

Deaf LGBTIQ
Coming Out Stories

Share your coming out story and inspire other Deaf Queers who are struggling with coming out.



We are accepting both written and video submissions. Your written story may be up to three pages in length. Video submissions may be up to five minutes in length and must be submitted in Quicktime format. All submissions must include your real full name, age, city, state, and occupation.

If your story is accepted, it will be published on National Coming Out Day (October 11, 2007) and permanently archived on DQRC's Deaf Queer Coming Out Stories website section. Submit your story to: comingoutstories07@deafqueer.org

FINE LINES

BY SUSAN MIRANDA

A version of this essay was presented as a part of "Building Bridges Between the Professions: A Talk about Working with Sex," featuring Carol Queen and Susan Miranda, at the Center for Sex and Culture, San Francisco, May 22, 2007.

It is a new experience for me to be at a Masturbate-a-thon, but I already have observed Carol Queen masturbate on stage at the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. I wouldn't go on stage and masturbate myself at a Masturbate-a-thon, but I have participated in Betty Dodson's masturbation workshop in New York City in 1992. There are fine lines between what I would do and what I wouldn't do and fine lines between what we might call sex work and other work. I saw the Sex Workers' Art Show that traveled the United States in 2002. After the show, I went up to some of the performers and asked, what is the difference between what you do and what I do as a pelvic model? For five years I've let future doctors, nurses, and chiropractors practice pelvic exams, using a speculum and breast exams on my body out of an attempt to teach both technique and how to do those exams in an emotionally sensitive way. Maybe the intent in pelvic modeling is not to create or experience sexual pleasure, but that does not mean it can't occur. And I certainly have had instances where I felt I was treated as though I was doing sex work.

Sex workers, tantra facilitators, sex coaching, sexological bodyworkers, sacred intimates, doctors, nurses, AIDS caregivers, sacred prostitutes. Who uses touch, and who does not? And why does it have to be so threatening if someone feels a little or very aroused? It's just touch. Sexual arousal or sensation all by itself does not have to be threatening. It's what we do with it, or the intent behind it, that is much more important. Perhaps the question we should be asking is not who is using touch but what kind of touch is being used. No touch is bad except non-consensual, disrespectful, seedy, or creepy touch, and then it is not the touch that is bad, it is the non-consent, disrespect, seediness, or creepiness that is bad. The most important thing is the intent and that isn't visible. It is a lot easier to make overt rules about our bodies and sex than exploring the subtle components

that go into all of our human interactions.

I used to tell the future doctors and nurses as they practiced on my body that only they know when their intent is good or not. I couldn't say when their intent was not good, but I could trust myself and speak up when it didn't feel right to me. Maybe that is where our focus should be. Instead of being protective of people as though sex and touch are dangerous, we ought to empower people to trust themselves, speak up for themselves, and know themselves. At least that is where I am putting my time and energy as I go around publicly talking about sexual healing, sacred intimacy, the concept that all of our body is good and deserving of touch - yes, even the genitals.

I will never excuse the violence and disrespect that can exist in our society. But it is not just the violence towards my genitals that I will not excuse. It is just as important how I get treated when I am doing paid office work or walking down the street as when I am doing pelvic modeling. And I can feel just as violated with my clothes on as I can with my genital area exposed.

Sex work: What is it? As if the words on this page isn't doing sex work! I can see the fine lines of healing, sexuality, touch and without any hesitation say sex is not the problem, nor is touch. Sex for money is not a problem any more than paying someone to care about us through counseling, therapy, or bodywork is a problem. There are fine lines. Let's live in the gray areas and ambiguity and complexity and unravel the obstacles to the pleasure that is our birthright.

Susan Miranda, M.A. is a sexuality educator and writer in Minneapolis, Minnesota and can be reached at miranda_susan@yahoo.com

MOON SERIES - 2006

By brown sappho

i. aquarius

you are indeed water,
the softest stuff in the world
penetrating, slowly then quickly
my hardest, most staunch defenses.

Insubstantial, you enter where no room was.
by you I knew something done by quiet being
and all the world but few know your accomplishment
without use of words...just hands, hearts,
beating and patient, soon you'll break the hardness of this bloody stone...
and embrace the moon....

.2. focused

I woke up, but did not think of our physical infirmities,
Did not think of my work calendar,
Nor the bouncing emails, and the kids' dental schedules.
This morning, I only thought of us alone,
No past, no future. only the present dancing in
unbounded spaces...inordinate.
my nips begin to ache an exquisite pain,
announcing I shall soon be dripping in blood.
am red,
and thou, deep blue.

3. QUINTESSENCE OF DUST-1

Listen, brothers:

I am more
than a pair of breasts
and hips and scented skin-
I have brains that function 24 hours
and this between my thighs
is not my only power.

I am more

Than my tears, more than the sadness;
my laughter is not
an empty tone, but bells that ring
of joy for children born;
My smiles have meaning,
My silences are not frailties,
nor am I just spring.

I am not of you; I am of me.
more than sex, more than
gender, I am half the world.
a wholeness in itself
with a thousand faces -
mother, daughter

wife, lover
sibling, friend;
servant, leader,

both patriot and fugitive
never rival,

always equal.

Come, brothers,

Join the dance

Of beats and rush

To a myriad, infinite
quintessence of dust!

4. RITUAL

I touch your hair and feel the silkiness of woman ;
I trace your brows, well kept and arched as mine.
I gaze into your eyes, a quiet soul, still healing;
Our noses touch, leaving us breathless, reeling;
I caress your cheeks - and fill my heart with softness.
I lift your chin as it quivers for the next kiss,
Our lips touch, and we are in moons of bliss.
So let us nurture this ritual of body and spirit,
Shave our brows and trade secrets like friends;
Carelessly flirt and cavort, for aren't we all lovers
Embracing the nights and leaving our scent on earth ;
Hold my hand in march, dear, sweet comrade, and
brave the battle of what we should become,
Then let us rise again to ourselves as women,
Rise to me again for another ritual of rebirth!
(NY, 2005)

Bust Out

a Madfemme social for all kindsa
bi-friendly grrrls

WHEN: Friday, September 28, 2007,
9:00-10:30 p.m. and on and on and
on...followed by 10:30-2 a.m. dancing with
us Bust*Out Grrrls & the regular club crowd.

HOW: (\$5 before 11:30, 21+)

WHERE: club Pure, downtown Boston

WHO: a joint Project of Madfemme-
pride & Boston Bisexual Women's
Network

RSVP: <http://lgbtfriends.meetup.com/19/calendar/5894746/?from=list>



BRUNCH
COORDINATOR WANTS
YOU TO HOST!

BBWN potluck brunches are a great way to meet other bi women in the Boston area. We try to hold a brunch in a member's home each month so that people can relax and share food and experiences in a safe space. Deb Morley is the brunch coordinator, so please contact her at debmo345@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting a brunch. Thanks Deb for volunteering! Hope you can join us.

SUNDAY, OCT. 21ST
BBWN Brunch at Lisa's in JP at noon. Bring dish or drinks to share. RSVP and contact Lisa for directions: 415-806-1257 or lisa.silveria@gmail.com



D A T E S T O R E M E M B E R

Mon. Sept 17—6-week gay-friendly classes begin: Swing/Lindy 1, Mad Hot Rhumba, and Belly Dance 1 & 2.

More info on our website: www.outtodance.com

For info call Liz Nania at 617-363-0029 or email liz@outtodance.com



WANTED:

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ONE TO HELP WITH THE
BBWN MAILINGS EMAIL
GREE0111@D.UMN.EDU

BiWomen

SUBSCRIPTION
RATE
for BiWomen
(sliding scale)



___\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___\$20-\$30 (suggested)

___\$30-\$100 Extra Special Donor

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BBWN, P.O. BOX 400639, Cambridge, MA
02140

ONGOING EVENTS

Last Friday:

Bi Women's Rap. 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge. Email Mischelle at puckipucki@aol.com for more information

2nd Thursday:

Women Over 40! New gatherings meeting from 6 p.m. until whenever. Held at Geoffrey's Cafe, 4257 Washington St., Roslindale, just north of the square

1st Wednesdays,

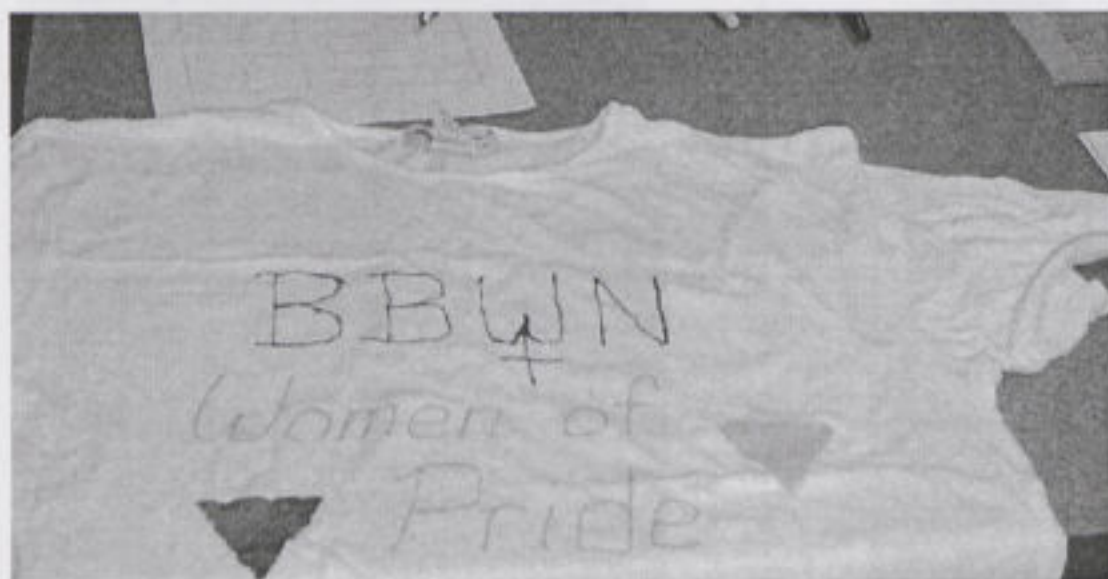
3rd Thursdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. The group meets at the Bisexual Resource Center at 29 Stanhope St. in Boston. Call 617-424-9595 for info.

2nd Wednesdays:

Boston Queer Poly Women's Discussion Group, 7-9 p.m. Meetings are held at the Diesel Cafe, 257 Elm St. in Somerville.

BISEXUALITY DAY



The Boston GLBTIQA community is invited to join us Thursday evening, September 20th, 2007, from 6:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m., at Tavern In The Square (Central Square), for a Boundless multifaceted evening celebrating bisexuality and the Boston-area launch of a new Bisexual Health publication.

Bisexual Health is a ground-breaking publication by Fenway Community Health, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and BiNet USA, available for free online download.* Learn tips about how to advocate for your personal health and the health of the bi community. While you party, find out what's in store for the future of bisexual health.

Celebrate Bisexuality Day is an annual, international day that calls for people to recognize and celebrate bisexuality. The local celebration will feature: complimentary copies of the new publication (limited quantity), and information and resources on bisexuality for everyone, free appetizers and soft drinks, cash bar, door prizes, including a signed copy of *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World* or *Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way*, and fun bi merchandise for sale.

Admission is FREE and open to all. For information, directions, RSVPs (appreciated but not necessary), please contact Julie at 617-927-6369 or jebin@fenwayhealth.org. Co-sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center and Fenway Community Health's Boundless and Living Well programs.

*To download the new Bisexual Health publication:
www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/bi_health_5_07.pdf

For more information:
www.fenwayhealth.org/site/Calendar?view=Detail&id=104981
www.biresource.org
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrate_Bisexuality_Day